

May Meeting

Friday, May 18

7:30 pm

*Our Saviour's Lutheran Church
1035 Carol Lane
Lafayette, CA*

V.E. Testing

Prior to the meeting from 6-7 PM.

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License Application Surge Continues

The ARRL Letter, Vol 26, No 17 (Apr 27, 2007)

It's been just a little more than two months since the FCC dropped the requirement that Amateur Radio applicants pass a Morse code test to earn operating privileges below 30 MHz. While the initial avalanche of applications immediately following February 23, when the no-Morse testing regime went into effect, has abated somewhat, business remains brisk for the ARRL Volunteer Examiner Coordinator staff.

President's QRM

by Marty Heyman, W6MDH




Well, propagation might not have been as much fun as an auction, but I enjoyed last meeting! It was

good to see such a big turnout.

Just a brief bit of QRM this month. Trevor Raty KG6MDW is getting married just before Field Day this year, pretty much a guarantee that he'll miss the mountain top. We're sure there will be plenty of help getting organized but you'll need to stay in touch while we sort out who's going to be the official leader (not that this crowd needs much leadership when it comes to getting out and on the air. I'm

confident this will all work out great and it will be a terrific time on the hill.

Speaking of the auction, one of the reasons we didn't have one this year is that John Schulze, our long-standing auction committee chairman, gatherer and storer, and auctioneer has been busy fixing up his house and generally taking a little time for himself and away from ALL the stuff he did for the club for so long.

We are glad he's getting to some of that other stuff but need some new hands to help. Let me know if you'd like to start organizing an auction for next year and we'll make sure you have plenty of help. Actually, we can always use a couple of helping hands. Don't be bashful! See you at the next meeting. 

"It's slowing down a little bit, but it's still substantially above what we usually see," observed ARRL VEC Manager Maria Somma, AB1FM. She estimated that new Amateur Radio applications were up by 35 percent, while upgrade applications were up by 150 percent over last year's volume.

In a typical pre-February 23 week, Somma said, ARRL VEC would receive paperwork from approximately 115 test sessions. "It's on the order of 150 to 200 sessions per week now!" she exclaimed. Somma and ARRL VEC staffers concurred that applications were roughly evenly split between newcomers and upgraders. She said

she's also seen a spike in the number of applications from General and higher class radio amateurs to serve as volunteer examiners.

To satisfy his own curiosity, ARRL member Tommy Gober, N5DUX, compiled some FCC statistics on the number of new Technician, General and Extra licensees before and after the Morse code requirement was deleted. His numbers show the FCC issued nearly 700 more Amateur Extra, 3625 more General and 454 more Technician licenses in March 2007 than in the same month last year.

Figures from ARRL member and

Continued on Page 3

Mt. Diablo Amateur Radio Club W6CX

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The Carrier is a monthly publication of the Mount Diablo Amateur Radio Club (MDARC). It is the policy of the editor to publish all material submitted by the membership provided such material is in good taste, relevant to amateur radio and of interest to MDARC members, and space is available. All material must be submitted to the editor by the last day of the month prior to publication. Material is accepted on a first-in, first-out basis. Articles and other material may be submitted via Internet email to carrier@mdarc.org or delivered to the editor at the address listed in the club roster. Material will be accepted in plain ASCII or rich text format (RTF). Material may also be submitted as hardcopy.

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MDARC Club Meeting Minutes

April 20, 2007

Our Saviour's Lutheran Church, 1035 Carol Lane, Lafayette, CA

President Marty Heyman called the meeting to order at 7:30 pm. The Pledge of Allegiance to the US Flag followed the opening.

Treasurer, Don Anthony, reported that the current checking balance is \$805 and the balance of the longer-term savings is \$51,000.

Marty reported for the Membership Chair that we are ahead of last year's membership for this time of the year at approximately 260 paid members.

Marty reported for the Technical Chair that the equipment on the hill is operating properly. He noted that there has been some discussion regarding some published information that the Pave Paws military across-the-horizon radar is being interfered with by some amateur radio 70 cm repeaters. The Club's 441.325 machine may be included as part of the issue. Marty pointed out that the issue is very preliminary and that nothing affecting our repeater is imminent. It was also noted that ARRL, U.S. government and NARCC would be involved in the processes to follow.


Bob Green, the Club Emergency

Coordinator, reported that a basic emergency training class will be held at 50 Glazier Drive in Martinez at 8:00 am on April 21.

Dick Brown, PACIFICON chairman, reported that ticket sales would start this next month. Anyone wishing to sell general admission tickets should contact Steve Wagner, KA6SFT (682-7495), who is responsible for Ticket Distribution. Dick asked anyone interested in speaking at the convention forums to contact Chris Suter at chris@srvfire.ca.gov

Jeremiah Blasi, Carrier Editor, asked that people please send him articles for the paper. He can be contacted at carrier@MDARC.org

Marty is looking for a few good men and women to assist in the administration of the club next year. The Nominating Committee may be contacting you soon.

Jim Brunk, VE, reported that 12 tests were given with the result of 10 new or upgraded hams. 

Dick Brown, KT6X
Acting Secretary

2007 Radio Communication Events

Pete Harris, KE6ZIW

MDARC Public Service Coordinator

Concord Mt. Diablo Trail Ride

Mt. Diablo, 4WD vehicles welcome
May 5, 2007

Radio Coordinator: : John Stuart

Devil Mountain Run

Danville

May 6, 2007

Radio Coordinator: Ed Ritchie

Escape from Alcatraz Swim and Triathlon

San Francisco Waterfront and Bay
June 3, 2007

Radio Coordinator: Barry Bettman
4th of July Parade

Downtown Pleasant Hill
July 4, 2007

Radio Coordinator: Pete Harris

Alcatraz Challenge Swim

San Francisco Waterfront and Bay
August 5, 2007

Radio Coordinator: ____

License Surge

Continued from Page 1


ham radio statistician Joe Speroni, AH0A, indicate the total number of Amateur Extra licensees is up 1649 from March 2006 to March 2007, while the General population grew by 2668. The total number of Technician licensees dropped by 1632 during the same period, however—and it continues to drop going into April. Speroni's figures also show that the grand total of Amateur Radio station licenses has declined by more than 12,800 over the past two years—to 655,048 at the end of March. *[Editor's note: Speroni's figures are updated regularly. Check them out for yourself at www.speroni.com/FCC.]*

The still-heavy volume has


stretched the amount of time it takes for an application to proceed from examination session to license grant. "I think we're looking at eight to ten days from the test date," Somma allowed. By and large, those on the waiting end have been patient and understanding, she added.

A staff of seven full-time and three part-time employees handle the "incoming" from Amateur Radio exam sessions across the US and from other sites where US Amateur Radio examinations are administered through ARRL VEC.

There's no light at the end of the tunnel just yet. Somma and her staff are looking ahead to 450 examination sessions registered for May, another 400 in June and 320 apiece during July and August. And summer is "the

slow season," she remarked. Another 900 test sessions already are on the calendar for the rest of 2007. 

SFARC/MDARC Campout

The 38th annual campout will take place starting on Friday, June 1st and end on Sunday, June 3rd at the Sugar Pine Dam Recreation Area. It is one of the most beautiful spots in Placer County. This will be a joint venture between the Club and another group of radio amateurs who have meeting for this annual event for the last 30 years. We are limited to 50 people at this site so get your reservations in early. The cost is \$35 per family. For more information, see www.sfarc.org/camp2007.htm. 

Editor's Exciter

by Jeremiah R. Blasi, K6BQ

I really enjoyed the April meeting program on Propagation Physics by Kristen McIntyre, K6WX. I must admit that since I am not a mathematician/physicist, there were several things that went over my head. However, I still learned a number of helpful things about propagation. Being a person who likes to understand how things work, it has already been a help in understanding a little more clearly what's happening to all that RF!

On another topic, this month I enjoyed branching out to a new aspect of amateur radio. I have read quite a bit about satellite contacts using an HT, but have never tried it. I just happened to be playing with my satellite tracking software (Orbitron: a great bit of freeware), and noticed that

Orbitron: www.stoff.pl

AO-51 (AMSAT-Echo) was making a pass almost directly overhead in a

few minutes. I grabbed my dual-band handheld and tuned to the appropriate frequency.

At the appointed time, I opened the squelch, and began orienting the antenna to bring in the signal. I must admit that I was quite surprised when I began hearing stations in the southwest exchanging information! One station identified as being portable, and it gave me hope. As the signal became stronger, I decided to give it a try myself. During a brief silence, I threw out, "K6BQ, CM97, handheld."

Despite the fact that I've heard stories of people having great success with handhelds, I really didn't believe that I'd actually make a contact. Imagine my shock when a station came back with my call!

Unfortunately, since I really didn't expect to make contact, I did not have paper or my voice recorder, and in the


excitement of the brief exchange, I forgot the call sign of the other station. I do remember that he was in grid-square DM13 (near San Diego), so perhaps I'll make contact again and complete the empty space in my log!

Since then, I've been able to make a couple other contacts on AO-51. I'm hooked. I have plans to build a handheld dual-band beam antenna for portable satellite work.

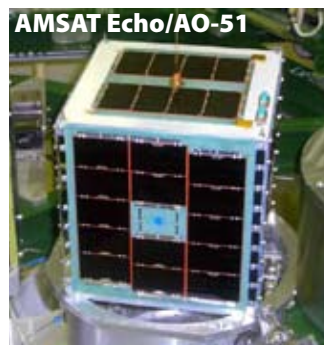
So what's the moral of the story? Try something new this month! Maybe there's a mode that you've been

thinking about trying, or a new kit you'd like to build. Take the plunge and just do it. You'll be glad you did.

By the way, when you discover how much fun it is to do something beyond your normal activity, write about it and send it to carrier@mdarc.org. It's even more

enjoyable when you can share it with others! 

Amateur Satellites:
www.amsat.org



Solar Flash

The ARRL Letter, Vol 26, No 17 (Apr 27, 2007)

Tad "I Live for the Sun" Cook, K7RA, Seattle, Washington, reports: Sunspots have reappeared over the past few days after six days of nothing. So far in April we've seen 18 days with zero spots, but a large sunspot, Number 953, now is rolling into view. A solar wind stream also is expected to hit Earth, causing a geomagnetic upset on Saturday, April 28.


The Australian Space Forecast Centre predicts quiet-to-unsettled conditions April 27, active-to-minor storm conditions April 28, and active conditions April 29. The US Air Force

predicts the planetary A index from April 27 through May 1 at 5, 25, 15, 10 and 8. Similar predictions from Geophysical Institute Prague give us quiet conditions April 27, active April 28, unsettled to active April 29, unsettled April 30, quiet to unsettled May 1, and back to quiet May 2-3.

There's been a lot of news this week regarding the solar minimum and predicted solar maximum. On April 25, a Solar Cycle 24 Prediction Panel consisting of members from NOAA, NASA and other agencies looked at all available predictions, attempted to reach consensus and released a statement <http://www.sec.noaa.gov/SolarCycle/SC24/Statement_01.html>. It looks like

the minimum between cycles 23 and 24 may not occur for another year, until March 2008, a year later than recently reported. The accuracy is expected to be plus or minus six months.

Sunspot numbers for April 19 through 25 were 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0 and 14, with a mean of 2. The 10.7 cm flux was 68.3, 68.5, 68.7, 68.9, 69.1, 73.2, and 76.5, with a mean of 70.5. Estimated planetary A indices were 6, 3, 2, 10, 18, 4 and 5, with a mean of 6.9. Estimated mid-latitude A indices were 4, 2, 2, 8, 10, 5 and 4, with a mean of 5.

For more information concerning radio propagation, visit www.arrl.org/tis/info/propagation.html. 

MDARC Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

April 2, 2007

Fuddruckers, 1940 N. Main St., Walnut Creek

President Marty Heyman, W6MDH, called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

Other Board Members present: Vice-President Sheldon Lawrence, KI6ATA; Secretary Paul Dickey, N6JOX; Treasurer Don Anthony, N6SIA; Jason Legate, W6SN; Trevor Hall, WA6JAU; Dave Gordon, N6SWE; and EC Bob Green, K6GD. Chairmen & other members present: Membership, Christina Johnson, KF6UXC; Pacifcon, Dick Brown, KT6X; and Jay Caldis, KT6Y.

Treasurer Don Anthony reported a balance of over \$53,000 total in the accounts, including CDs. The Board approved a transfer of funds from a CD to the operating checking account to pay anticipated monthly expenses.

The minutes of the Feb. 5 meeting were APPROVED as printed in the Carrier.

Committee Reports:

- **Tech:** Trevor Hall reported that the Committee had not met, however a report of interference was being checked out. The next meeting would be Saturday.

- **Membership:** Christina reported 1 application had been received. Dick Brown noted that applications are needed at the general meetings and at the testing area for those wishing to join after passing the exam. Autoslots are assigned by Jay after receiving the membership list.
- **EC:** Field Day will be held on Mt. Diablo.
- **Pacifcon:** The tickets are being printed, the first vendor signed up.


Old business: Trevor Hall reminded the Board that an Extra class is due

to start Apr. 3, in Concord, Tues. 7pm, using the Salvation Army facility.

New business: In response to an inquiry, the Board's consensus was that the current policy of restricting use of the repeaters for nets would be continued; only non-profit service organizations' use is considered on a case-by-case basis.

Marty reported that Board member Trevor Raty KG6MDW, had resigned because of a move.

The Board agreed that VE testing was needed at each club meeting.

Marty adjourned the meeting at 7:55 PM. 

Respectfully submitted,
Paul Dickey, N6JOX, Secretary

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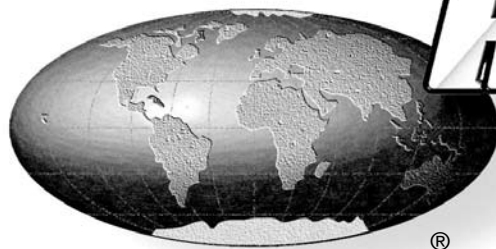
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Thursday 7:30 pm

MDARC Club Net

Thursday 8:00 pm

General ATV Net

Contra Costa County ARES/RACES Nets

Thursday, 7:00 pm

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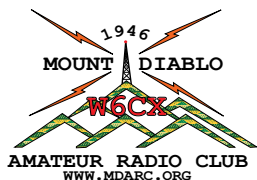
May Events

May 7 7:00 pm **MDARC Board Meeting**
Fuddrucker's, 1940 N. Main St., Walnut Creek

May 18 7:30 pm **MDARC Monthly Meeting**
Our Savior's Lutheran Church, Lafayette

May 27 **May Carrier Deadline**

June 4 7:00 pm **MDARC Board Meeting**
Fuddrucker's, 1940 N. Main St., Walnut Creek



The Carrier

Newsletter of the Mt. Diablo Amateur Radio Club

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www.mdarc.org



Next meeting: May 18
